Rome Palazzo Poli May 14

1862.

My dear Maria

I know that you will feel great concern about me, & I am glad to be able to send a rather better account of myself than perhaps in your anxiety you may expect. — The misfortunes of others to which I returned from Marseilles & the absorbing occupation, served to keep me from sinking under such a load of care now I begin to feel like myself — Mod certainly I now see that had my dear wife been able to bear that fearful journey to Paris, her sufferings without hope would have afflicted me more than her death — Twas very cruel that our life of 34 years should have had such a finish when we were looking forward to quiet days

in Rome, but you see it was not to be —

The fearfull expences threatened to ruin me for during the 3 months & ½ at Marseilles of this year more than £200 was expended that is the sum imposed by the government exercised to that sum — I may take a year before I recover such a blow even this can only be by the most rigid saving — I trust that I shall be able to let a large part of my house & friends are now in treaty for it so that I shall stand at £21 a year

But yet my return back to Rome is made pleasant by the great kindness & attention I receive & my occupation is very interesting & not very hard work — I receive visitors from 10 to 3 & during these hours some 40 or 50 have used to come, most about things of moment — But now the English are gone in great numbers, & I am left to myself

It seems my fate to have a life of trouble does it not? So soon after I was settled in Rome such an accumulation of troubles is most singular — but I have the thankfull that good health & spirits are my only good fortune now & with these I may get thro' all my troubles — Soon I hope to finish an allegorical picture of England & Italy, two half length figures — Italy a mournfull figure in black sitting against a sarcophagus & England a brilliant fair beauty who arrives to comfort her — English ships on the distance & signs of commerce

You'll be interested to know how I spend my time — I am up at ½ p. 5 in the cool morn & walk — then work part at 7 — write till ½ p 9 when my letters & despatches arrive — settle these & go to my painting if I have not visitors & continue till 3 when my Secretary leaves during this time I have to sign numerous